

SEHAB Central North Island Roundtable Oct. 2013

Port Alberni : Witnesses observed the offloading of the OCEAN KING mort packer for Mainstream. They are moving the viral infected fish through the most productive wild salmon waters of the west coast of Vancouver Island - Alberni Inlet, avoiding every fish farm. There was no containment around the vessel as they pumped. The trucks were dripping bloody water as they drove to the nearby Land, Earth and Sea "organic" composting facility between China Creek and Port Alberni. There is concern this will leach directly into the Inlet. People do not understand why this facility was used and not the much more secure mass mortality compost facility in Parksville. These fish should be removed before the next big rainfall.

Local First Nations were contacted by us but were not notified. DFO was called but they were not visible on scene, the mayor showed up.

Quadra Island: Just an update on the Herring issue. We did get a meeting with DFO re our concern on herring stocks locally and we had DFO records of spawn and catch results but they still insisted that the stock is healthy. Unfortunately they still roll in the southern stocks with the Northern stocks. We have had one bright spot of info from the Quadra Enhancement group, they had a good herring spawn last year in Hyacinth Bay and in Heriot Bay-Drew Harbour as they always do and consequently there coho returns in Village Bay creek are still good, so far they have over 500 coho counted in there fence, were we have only 30. To bad that the tidal flow from that area flows north through Okisollo channel and not around Cape Mudge.

My response is that the Feds have given themselves the window to adjust the fisheries act to suit any bottleneck they run up against in there plans to push a pipeline or a mine in or near a fish habitat or waterway. This way they do not commit themselves to an up front decision and get everybody mad before it happens.

Karl Fuchs: Most of the groups at C/River have been at Stream keeping for 20 years or more, and we need more help. We have had a lot of help from our Community Adviser who has now retired.

As you know there has been some progress. But we have lost more streams then we have saved; nine small creeks from Oyster River Area D to Campbell River. Boundary wet lands that supported these small Water sheds are gone. Most of these streams still hold some smolt and fry, as well as cutthroat trout which are Blue listed.

We still feel that with proper setbacks and with stream work, these streams could still produce a good number of fish.

We have no new people coming in and we wonder why people that make their living from fishing, guiding and ocean-oriented resorts are not coming in to help improve their livelihood and environment.

Faye: Just when you think things can't get worse for fish and fish habitat, it does. It seems like our government is intent on destroying everything I hold dear - our salmon, our beautiful province and, indeed, our country of Canada.

However, I think you just have to focus on the small things that can be done in your own streams. There may not be many people involved, but your successes, however small, will inspire others as long as they

hear about them.

It helps A LOT to have a fisheries biologist, dedicated enthusiast, like Dave Clough, to get advice from and talk to and it helps to invite others to come and talk to you. (Qualicum Beach Streamkeepers just had Dr. Kristi Miller, salmon genome researcher, speak at our AGM Saturday. Even tho she's been somewhat muzzled by DFO, she was able to convey that fact that scientists really are trying to find answers to the troubling things that are happening in the marine environment).

I'm sorry the CR group is so discouraged. It's hard to be upbeat when things are going downhill, but the fact that the fish are still hanging in there has got to be a good news story! I wish them all the best and hope they don't give up.

Qualicum Beach Streamkeepers started with 2 impacted urban streams in 1995. We have rehabilitated both now but not without a LOT of money because there were barriers to spawning salmon at both mouths of the creeks. Thanks to the Town and various funders, including government, they are now salmon-bearing again (and we continue to improve habitat). I doubt that we could have done it in today's world - government has backed away and funding from foundations and municipalities is much harder to come by. Sorry to be a downer. MVIHES is trying to be a leader in watershed protection - where volunteers take on the task of monitoring the indicators of healthy watersheds based on a status report for the Englishman River (just coming out now).